

F 74

.N5 N536



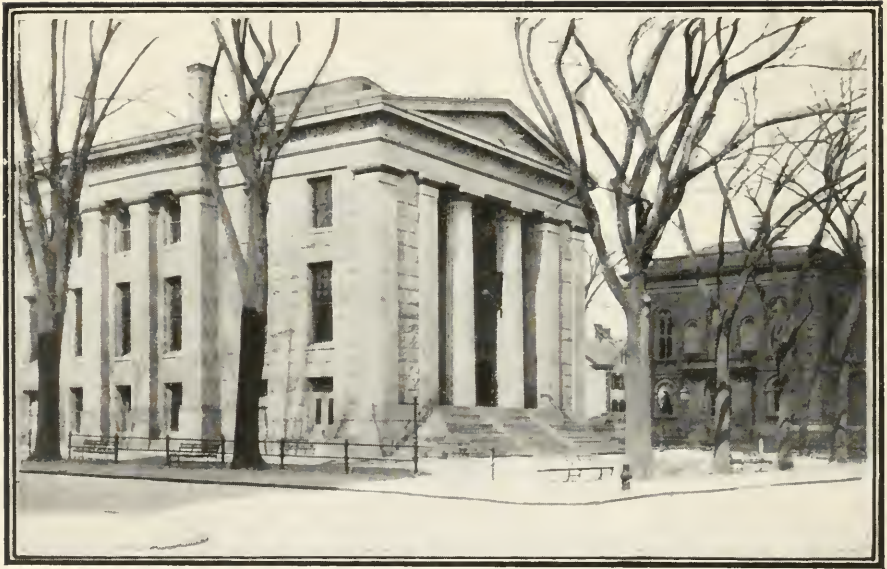














New Bedford, Mass. Free Public Library

# Commemorative Exercises

City Hall, New Bedford, Massachusetts

March 30, 1908



F44  
R5N536

ol

Gift  
Publisher

## SHORT SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF THE BUILDING.

The New Bedford City Hall, the center of the civic life of the town and city for seventy years, was erected in 1838-9. The funds for its construction were in part a sum received from the United States Government at the distribution of surplus revenue in 1837, the remainder was provided by the city.

The architects were Russell Warren of Providence and Seth H. Ingalls of New Bedford. The contractors and builders were S. H. Ingalls and W. Ingalls. The Committee of the Town Government in charge of construction comprised Hon. James Howland, George Howland, Jr., Hon. Joseph Grinnell, Zachariah Hillman, George T. Baker, and James B. Congdon.

The first action on the part of the town was at a meeting on April 3, 1837, when the selectmen were authorized to purchase a lot on William Street for the purpose of constructing a new Market, and at an adjourned session on the 17th, it was voted to "appropriate that part of the surplus revenue which shall be apportioned to this town, together with the sum of \$12,000, which is now in the treasury and applicable to that purpose, to the purchase of a lot and the erection of a Town Hall and Market House on William Street."

The building was constructed of local and Fall River granite, and is 100 ft. long by 61 ft. wide; three stories high. At the front of the entrance are two massive fluted Doric columns.

At first all the town and city offices were housed on the top floor, the main floor being reserved for a hall, the lower floor at first being used for a Market, later occupied by city offices. In 1872 the Market was removed from the basement floor. In 1854 the Trustees of the Free Public Library de-

sired to occupy the lower floor for library purposes, but the plan to construct the present library building obviated the necessity for pressing the matter.

During the seventy years of its active service as the home of the City Government the building has furnished useful and varied services, the hall proper serving as a forum for all varieties of civic and political meetings, and a convenient place for holding many social gatherings. The fire which occurred on December 11, 1906, terminated the history of the building as a City Hall, and almost immediately public sentiment manifested itself in favor of remodelling the building for use as a Free Public Library.

## RECORD OF COMMITTEE MEETING.

New Bedford, March 23, 1908.

Pursuant to an invitation from Hon. William J. Bullock, Mayor of New Bedford, representatives of the City Council, the Old Dartmouth Historical Society, and the New Bedford Board of Trade met in Room 8, Library Building, to arrange for exercises to be held in the City Hall April 30th in commemoration of the passing of the New Bedford City Hall, about to be reconstructed for use as a building for the Free Public Library.

There were present all the members of the committee selected, as follows:

Representing the City Council:—Alderman Samuel F. Winsper, Councilmen Daniel J. Sullivan and Louis N. Schuler.

Representing the Old Dartmouth Historical Society:—Edmund Wood, Abbott P. Smith, George H. Tripp.

Representing the New Bedford Board of Trade:—William W. Crapo, Herbert E. Cushman, William L. Sayer.

Alderman Samuel F. Winsper was elected chairman and Walter H. B. Remington secretary.

During a general discussion as to a programme for the commemoration meeting, Mr. Sayer suggested that the mayor be asked to preside; that some one, preferably Mr. Crapo, be asked to speak of the past of the City Hall; and that some member of the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library be asked to speak of the future of the building.

On motion of Mr. Smith it was

Voted, That the commemoration exercises be divided into three parts—past, present, and future.

On motion of Mr. Tripp it was

Voted, That Mayor William J. Bullock be requested to preside at the commemoration exercises.

On motion of Mr. Cushman it was

Voted, That William W. Crapo be asked to speak on the past of City Hall.

On motion of Mr. Smith it was

Voted, That the Board of Trustees of the Free Public Library be invited to seats on the platform, and that one of their number be requested to speak for the future of the building.

The following sub-committees were appointed:

On Music:—Messrs. Sullivan and Schuler.

On Programme:—Messrs. Sayer and Tripp.

On Finance:—Messrs. Winsper, Sullivan, and Schuler.

On Seating:—Messrs. Winsper, Sullivan, and Schuler.

On motion it was

Voted, That the committee adjourn, subject to the call of the chair.

Adjourned.

Attest:

W. H. B. REMINGTON,  
Secretary.

ORDER OF EXERCISES.

Orchestral Selection—"Memories of Olden Days"

Address by the Presiding Officer

Hon. William J. Bullock

Singing—"America," by the Audience

(Edgar Lord, Director)

My country, 'tis of thee,  
Sweet land of Liberty,  
Of thee I sing;  
Land where my fathers died,  
Land of the pilgrims' pride,  
From every mountain side  
Let freedom ring.

My native country, thee,  
Land of the noble free,  
Thy name I love;  
I love thy rocks and rills,  
Thy woods and templed hills,  
My heart with rapture thrills  
Like that above.

Let music swell the breeze,  
And ring from all the trees  
Sweet Freedom's song;  
Let mortal tongues awake;  
Let all that breathe partake;  
Let rocks their silence break,  
The sound prolong.

Our father's God, to thee,  
Author of Liberty,  
To thee we sing;  
Long may our land be bright  
With Freedom's holy light;  
Protect us by thy might,  
Great God, our King.

Address—The City Hall of the Past

Hon. William W. Crapo

Address—The Library of the Future

Rev. Matthew C. Julien

(Representing the Board of Free Public Library Trustees.)

Singing—"Auld Lang Syne" by the Audience

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And never brought to mind?  
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,  
And days of auld lang syne.

For auld lang syne, my dear,  
For auld lang syne;  
We'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet  
For auld lang syne.

And here's a hand, my trusty frien',  
And gie's a hand o' thine;  
We'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet,  
For auld lang syne.

For auld lang syne, my dear,  
For auld lang syne;  
We'll tak' a cup o' kindness yet  
For auld lang syne.

COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS.

Chairman—Alderman Samuel F. Winsper.

Secretary—Walter H. B. Remington.

Representing the City Council—Alderman Samuel F. Winsper, Councilmen Daniel J. Sullivan, Louis N. Schuler.

Representing the Old Dartmouth Historical Society—Edmund Wood, Abbott P. Smith, George H. Tripp.

Representing the Board of Trade—Herbert Cushman, William W. Crapo, William L. Sayer.

Ushers, from the High School Cadets—Captain Walter E. S. Tanner; Lieutenants Frederic T. Browne, Jr., Holden Remington; Sergeants George B. Irish, Henry W. Smith, George E. Briggs, Jr., Francis F. Jones; Corporals Alfred S. Milliken, Albert C. Sherman, Chauncey M. Butler, Isaac A. Crapo, Frederic W. Apelquist, Ellery L. Vogel; Privates Howard I. Wordell, William A. Jenney. Sullivan's Orchestra.

The programme began with an orchestral selection, "Memories of Olden Days," following which Mayor Bullock delivered his address.

### MAYOR BULLOCK.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Mayor Bullock. "We have come here tonight to bid farewell to this hall as a public meeting place, and to commemorate the services it has rendered to the community for so many years.

"For over sixty years has it stood, rendering service both to the town and the city, and it seems only fitting that we should hold some public service which would close its career as a public meeting-place, and to wish it God-speed on its new career; and we feel proud that the building is still to continue in the service of the city, though in another channel.

"I see by the programme that I am listed to make an address; in this hall in January of this year I delivered my inaugural and with that I am satisfied. I can only say that I am proud to be called on to preside at this meeting.

"I will try to recall one or two things in the history of the city, and one or two of the present day, and will then give over the duty of addressing you to those who are better fitted than I.

"When this city was incorporated in 1847, this hall and 102 rods of land were put in by the sub-committee selected to appraise the value of the city, as valued at \$71,500. I also find that it was necessary to raise from \$70,000 to \$80,000 by taxation. That today is but one dollar on a thousand of our valuation, which shows what an important community we have grown to be since the inauguration of the first mayor of New Bedford in this hall.

"Then the city had about 16,000 inhabitants. Today, it is estimated that our population is between 90,000 and 100,000.



“At that time, it was necessary to maintain only four city departments. Today, we have twenty-four departments, and their offices are scattered throughout the centre of the city.

“When the fire of a year ago destroyed the interior of this structure, it became necessary either to erect a new building or to reconstruct the present edifice. I was aware of the history and traditions of the old City Hall; but it seemed to me that the proposed disposition of the building was a proper solution, to preserve the exterior, and to hand the building down for uninterrupted service for many years to come, let us hope.

“I know that many things have taken place here about which it would be possible to talk for hours; but I do not propose so doing, for I know you wish to listen to those who have participated in many more of them than I; and therefore I shall not speak further, except to ask the audience to rise while we all sing ‘America.’”

---

Edgar Lord led the audience in the singing of the anthem, following which Mayor Bullock introduced Hon. William W. Crapo.

“I believe that we were particularly fortunate in the selection of a speaker for the past at these exercises, and I know that every citizen feels an extreme delight that he has consented to address you on this occasion. He has addressed many meetings in this hall, and I can think of no one better qualified to speak for the past, the present, and I hope a great deal of the future. Much of his money and his industry has been devoted to building up the industries of the city; he has represented this district with honor in congress, and he has been prominent in the civic life of this city. I desire, on behalf of all, to thank him for you for his interest in this occasion.”

## HON. WILLIAM W. CRAPO.

Mr. Mayor and Fellow Citizens :

This occasion revives many memories. When a lad I witnessed the erection of this building. I watched the stone cutters as they hammered and chiselled the blocks of granite that were placed in its walls. I recall the talk on the street when the massive granite columns in front of the entrance, quarried in Fall River, were brought here drawn by many oxen. These columns look smaller now than they did in my boyhood.

In the earlier days of New Bedford the inhabitants provided for public use a market place and town hall. With the growth of the town and the increase of population these facilities became inadequate. Market Square, as it was called, in the rear of the old town house and which had its entrance on Third Street was not large enough to hold all the wagons of the farmers who brought their produce for sale. The stalls in the market occupied by Comfort Whiting and Bethuel Penniman, Sr., and others were too few in number and not convenient for their customers. The town hall on election and town meeting days was often crowded to an extent which rendered orderly proceedings difficult. Hence there was an agitation for more ample accommodations. The movement was hastened by the distribution from the Treasury of the United States of what was called the surplus revenue fund. In this distribution New Bedford received \$18,250. The town authorized the purchase of a lot of land and the construction of a building suitable for a market, a town hall and rooms for the town officers. A Committee was appointed. The land purchased was bounded by William and Market Streets and Sixth and Pleasant

Streets. Plans were drawn, and contracts made. Russell Warren, prominent in his profession, was the architect. Seth H. Ingalls, a well known citizen, was the contractor. The work was begun in 1838 and completed in 1839. The result was this structure, imposing in its architecture, well adapted for the uses for which it was intended, substantial in character and appearance and honest in its workmanship. It has stood the test of seventy years and several generations have looked upon it with pride.

At the outset the feature regarded of great importance was the market. This desire of the citizens was evidently satisfied as we find in the report of the Selectmen upon the completion of the building that the market was not surpassed in any city or town in the country. This market consisted of ten stalls of exceptionally large size equipped with the best appliances in use, each having a separate cellar of easy access. The town charged a rental for these stalls, the occupants paying one dollar a week as rent.

It may interest you to know the cost of construction and how the same was met. The undertaking was certainly a large one in a community of about ten thousand population.

There was expended for the purchase of land and the construction of the building \$56,000. There was a further expenditure of \$1100 for fixtures and furniture and the still further expenditure of \$2100 for paving the area within the lines of the street. This latter outlay was not only for the neatness of the premises, but also for the better exhibit of the vegetables and berries, butter, eggs and poultry brought there for sale by the farmers and gardeners. In those days there were no delivery wagons. People of all classes went to the market with their baskets and having made their selections carried them home. The total cost of land, buildings, furniture and paving amounted to \$59,800. How was this met? Our fathers of seventy years ago had no knowledge of the mysteries of modern municipal finance. They had not heard of municipal bonds whether issued inside the debt limit or outside the debt limit. If an additional school-house was required to take care of the overflow from crowded

schoolhouses by reason of increased number of pupils or if a market and town hall were desired for the convenience of the citizens they were built and paid for. The cost was not made by the creation of a debt to be paid twenty or thirty years hence by their children. It is different now. Perhaps we are wiser than our fathers were.

I confess to a sentimental attachment and regard for this building. It was here in this building more than sixty years ago that I had employment. My name was not upon the pay roll and although my duties were not of great importance they were clearly defined. At that time and for a number of years my father held the office of Town Clerk and also the office of Town Treasurer and Collector of Taxes. His compensation for these two offices was the annual salary of \$1500 a year out of which it devolved upon him to pay for clerk hire and janitor's service. Saturdays and school vacation weeks I was in attendance doing the work assigned to me. If it became necessary or desirable for the Town Clerk and the Town Treasurer to take a day off I was in charge of the offices, receiving payment of taxes, filling out certificates of intentions of marriage and the like. I had the key of the vault and was the custodian of the records and documents of the town. This shows the simplicity and littleness of sixty years ago in contrast with the present.

The office of the Town Clerk and Town Treasurer was the southeast corner room of the upper floor. The Selectmen occupied the room at the southwest corner which afterwards became the aldermanic chamber. James B. Congdon was the chairman of the board. His associates at the time of the construction of the building were J. Peckham West and Thomas B. Bush. Mr. Congdon was the cashier of the Merchants Bank. In those days the banks closed their doors at one o'clock and did not re-open in the afternoon. Every week day afternoon Mr. Congdon could be found at the Selectmen's room engaged in the town's affairs.

In the history of New Bedford, city or town, there has been no man in my opinion who rendered municipal service equal to that performed by Mr. Congdon. He was a man of

tireless industry, thoroughly acquainted with all the details of the town's business, devotedly attached to the town and its people, and earnest in the promotion of all their moral and intellectual and material interests. As chairman of the board he was the active force in initiating and carrying forward public improvements. As is shown in his election and re-election year after year without opposition his fellow citizens had the fullest confidence in his integrity and sound judgment, and great respect for his scholarship and literary attainments

I did but little work for the Selectmen beyond the running of errands and occasional carrying out of notices. I recall, however, one duty which fell to me. On a table in the Selectmen's room stood a pitcher and I had been instructed that whenever the chairman appeared, to take the pitcher to the town pump in the rear of the building and filling it to return it for the refreshment of the Selectmen and those who might call there.

I trust you will pardon the mention of these trivial incidents in my boyhood. The recital indicates the failing that comes to men when they have reached the reminiscient age.

I was speaking of Mr. Congdon. Later in life I knew him intimately and admired him greatly. On the records of New Bedford there can be found no name more worthy of honorable mention and grateful remembrance than his. He was the foremost advocate and promoter for the construction of the library building across the street. At the laying of its corner stone, he delivered an able address in which he spoke eloquently of the advantages to the community in education and literary culture and general knowledge through the reading of books. It is a pleasant reflection that the library having outgrown its limits finds its new home and greater opportunities for future usefulness in this building constructed under his guidance, and where during many years he faithfully labored in the service of his fellow townsmen.

The recital of the many important events that have taken place within these walls would weary you. In the earlier years the town meetings were held here. Some of

them were calm and deliberate, others excited by vehemence and heat of personal debate. Eminent men have stood upon this platform—Presidents and ex-Presidents of the United States. Distinguished orators and statesmen have spoken here upon great questions of public policy. Issues, local, state and national, have been presented by earnest advocates who have received the enthusiastic and even rapturous applause of ardent admirers. There have been notable banquets held in this hall. In 1840 on the opening and completion of the railroad from New Bedford to Taunton there was a banquet attended by the Governor of the Commonwealth and his staff, distinguished state and national officers and men prominent in public and private life. Some years later there was a banquet in honor of the merger of the New Bedford Railroad with the Boston, Clinton & Fitchburg Railroad. In those days railroad mergers were popular and their accomplishment was celebrated with festivities. In 1864 there was a banquet which closed the proceedings celebrating the two hundredth anniversary of the old town of Dartmouth. One other event I will mention which is remembered by some who are present tonight and doubtless by some who participated in it. It was in the dark hours of the Civil War. Day after day crowds of men assembled in front of the hall, listening to patriotic and fervent appeals for the preservation of the Union spoken from the steps. And some may remember the little tent pitched at the southeast corner of these grounds in which at a table was seated a recruiting officer, and these men of New Bedford entered and signed the muster roll volunteering to go to the front to fight in the national defense. And some may remember too how loyal women of New Bedford took possession of the Common Council chamber and received there and gathered up and packed in boxes the articles they sent to army hospitals and to soldiers in the field

Whoever shall write the history of City Hall will write in no small degree the history of New Bedford.

Mr. Mayor, I am instructed by members of the Board of Trade to bring their message to this meeting. That organi-

zation is composed of men whose purpose is the welfare and extension of the industrial interests of the community, the stimulation of business enterprise, the encouragement of additions to our commerce and trade and manufactures, and the advocacy of superior advantages of New Bedford in the competitive contest for rank in the business world. These men express their satisfaction that the City Hall, having passed beyond the uses for which it was designed, is to be devoted to the library. They realize that the material prosperity of our city is dependent upon the greater intelligence of its people. The world demands that its business men and working men shall be educated, and the city does well after the mental training and discipline of the schools, to open wide the doors for the old and young to the accumulated knowledge of the past, and give free and easy access to the scientific discoveries and improved methods of recent years.

In bidding good-bye to the City Hall as it is about to enter another field of usefulness there is the consoling thought that while it has signally and successfully performed the mission for which it was created, it is to have a part in a grand and lofty purpose capable of the bestowal of gifts of inestimable value.

## REV. MATTHEW C. JULIEN.

Mr. Julien, whose subject was "The Library of the Future," spoke as follows:

"Your Honor, the Mayor, Ladies and Fellow Citizens: I have been asked by the committee to say a few words tonight in the name of the trustees on "The Library of the Future." The meaning of this occasion is, of course, primarily reminiscent; and, as was to be expected, when Mr. Crapo is the speaker, the story of the past has been most admirably presented. The day when this building is completed and ready for occupancy will be the time for fuller consideration of the promises which the future holds forth. Yet it is impossible on the present occasion wholly to set aside the thought of that which is to follow in the future use of this historic building. As a matter of fact we are standing tonight between a memory and a vision. Behind us is the fast-receding land of past achievements; before us—though less definitely—rise, amid luminous mists, the shores of future conquest and possession. And yet the two are directly connected with each other. Beneath the tossing and ever-shifting billows of the present the land of memory reaches onward to the land of vision. It is the enlargement and quickening of the intellectual and civic life of the people which have created the need for greater facilities, which has made the demand for the new library imperative. We talk of the past, the present and the future. Yet these are only mental distinctions. Time is one. The people who lived in New Bedford before us built and supported the old library. We of today hope to enter into the enjoyment of the new library. There are other people to come who will have whatever we provide for them. In sober fact the distinction



is not so much one of time as of the relation we hold between ourselves and other people. Those of an earlier time gave us what we possess today. The real issue is one of obligation—what will we give to the other people of this city who are to follow us. It is not merely the question of a new building for library purposes which is involved. For the new building, to have any real meaning, implies a new life—a broadening of the aim of the policy of the institution, that it may answer the needs of the ever-growing intellectual life of the city. The need for this advance is clear to any user of the library. With a wealth of material and a liberal provision for its increase, it has yet been impossible to make these treasures of such service to the people as they ought to render. The lack of accommodation—and I may add—of unconditioned funds for administrative and other purposes—makes the very wealth of the other possessions an actual embarrassment. Treasures of knowledge and art and insufficient means to make them serviceable—or even properly to store and arrange them—this has been the problem for which at last we may believe the solution is within our sight. Not only to the trustees, but to all who have made use of the library in the years gone by, this hour is the beginning of the fulfilment of the years of dreaming and of hope. If at times the doubt arose whether the annual reports issued by the board were ever actually read by anybody outside of the printing office, yet these yearly effusions have at least offered the opportunity to construct in imagination and to express in print the library of the future which was the ever present dream. Indeed, it has seemed to some of us here to be only a dream for so many long years, that when the new building shall actually appear before us in its completeness, I fear we shall be inclined to doubt the evidence of our senses.

“I should hardly be surprised if there will not be some one who will feel like the farmer who made his first visit to a circus. He came from back among the hills where he had lived till late in life, knowing town-life only by hearsay. As he entered the circus tent the first object that met his

gaze was a dromedary. Before the strange creature he stood for a long time, noting each peculiarity. Even when the band was playing and the entertainment in the ring had begun, he still stood there gazing at the dromedary—at the protruding lower lip, the long legs with the knotted knees and the great feet, and at the double hump upon its back. Finally he turned away with the emphatic exclamation: ‘Gosh! there ain’t no sich animal!’

“While it is out of place to attempt tonight to present with any completeness the uses which a free public library in this modern age ought to serve, yet I may briefly indicate the more important of these, as an outline of the future library to which we are looking forward. The two main ends to be sought are: the permanent value of the collection itself, since the library abides while the generations pass away; and also the practicable serviceableness of this collection to the people, with the ever-changing needs of a continuous present. There was a time when the popular impression of a library was that it was an institution for the benefit mainly of scholars. And this impression still survives in many minds. But it is becoming understood, more and more, as the years go by, that far beyond any uses which it may serve the student of literature, of art, of history, or of science, its highest purpose is that it shall be the means for the education of the people at large. In a real sense it is true to say that the ideal public library will become the people’s university. Far away as may now seem to be the possibility of the complete fulfilment of this aim, it is along this line, nevertheless, that every important change in the history of the modern library movement has been and is advancing. The thought is at least dawning upon men that the old-time definition of a ‘liberal education’ has been too limited and artificial.

“I mean no disparagement to college training when I say frankly that education is not the exclusive monopoly of the schools. In the interest not so much of a greater but of a saner New Bedford of the future, our library has an important function to perform. It is not merely by supply-

ing the books that are asked for, that this service is to be fulfilled; but by using such means as experience suggests for stimulating the desire for mental equipment, in the popular heart.

“The influence of an intellectual environment, which a library, under proper conditions, could supply, is itself no small part of its mission. Whatever native genius the German people have for music or the Italians for painting and sculpture, it can hardly be questioned that the popular appreciation of these races has been largely augmented by centuries of intimate association with the noblest examples of these great arts. The galleries of the old world have not only gratified the artistic taste of the people, but they have created and developed it. And a like purpose, especially in the realm of literature, can a free public library in America serve, if adequately equipped and sustained.

“I look for the time when this library will become, by means of its lecture halls and exhibition rooms, as well as by its book circulation, the centre of the intellectual life of New Bedford. Of course that means more than a building. It means able and earnest leadership. And I am glad to bear witness tonight that I believe I speak in the name of all the trustees that we are confident that in our present librarian we have the man not only of the hour, but the man for the future.

“There is demanded also for the fulfilment of the higher aim of a public library that there shall be a genuine and enthusiastic civic pride. The promise of this occasion, when we are closing the doors of this building as a City hall, lies in the fact that they are to be opened again as the intellectual home of the people. Though used in a different way, it will continue to be in the people’s service. It will still be a ‘city hall.’ Its historic associations will be an advantage in the accomplishment of the higher ends of a public library. A part of its value will come from its historic memories and traditions. The direct and vital relations which the traditions of a community bear to its welfare, morally as well as intellectually, is a fact too

readily forgotten by many. Whatever destroys or impairs, in the popular mind, without just ground, these civic memories and the pride they rightly nourish, is an injury to be lamented and hard to overcome. Whatever helps to perpetuate these traditions from one generation to another, and thus develop and strengthen the home pride is a real aid to a city's progress.

“I treasure the belief that the library of the future New Bedford will be the richer for the influence, unseen but real, of the memories which these courses of massive stone enshrine. It is well, if, upon these walls tonight, we have seen the pictures of the past change into prophecies of the fulfilment of the people's dream.”



JUL 3 1908

**P D 18 1**













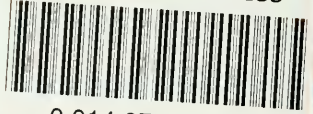
DOBBS BROS.  
LIBRARY BINDING

MAY 72  
ST. AUGUSTINE  
FLA.



32084

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 079 263 9

